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The Box – Executive Summary

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[A Digital Health & Care Institute (DHI) Collaboration, University of Strathclyde]

Music plays a major role in development through fostering communication skills, self-expression and self-esteem and creates confident, active and creative individuals. The powerful medium of music and its effects also plays a successful role in overt clinical healthcare contexts as well as therapeutic workshop settings.

The Box project employed a user-driven approach to develop a flexible and creative way in which to make the delivery of therapy-based musical interactions achievable for all, regardless of musical ability.

The project was proposed by our partners, GHRL, and was undertaken in collaboration with the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), the Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS), and The Haven, Millbank Primary School.

Experience Labs provided a participatory approach to explore The Box concept, identify key user needs and insights, leading to requirements for development. The project involved a series of Labs taking place within an educational and hospice setting. Participants in the Labs included children with various abilities and needs, teachers, hospice staff and a music specialist.

Several musical concepts were designed and tested over the course of the Labs leading to the recommendation of an overall concept that provides the choice of two operational modes to meet the needs of the user. The Box concept evolved to both facilitate intentional musical engagement between children and parents, teachers, practitioners and carers, and provide the option to connect to a networked community to share resources and examples of best practice. In this way, The Box provides the resources to inspire, support, and tailor the experience to meet the needs of the child, to create meaningful musical engagement.